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TAGS: KPAO OPRC KMDR PREL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; UPCOMING TRIP OF U/S NICHOLAS BURNS TO ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL; IISS CONCLUSIONS; ARGENTINE SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE WILL TAKE THE US SUPREME COURT OF JUSTICE'S PUBLIC HEARINGS AS A MODEL; THE US AND VENEZUELA; CUBA; ARGENTINE PRESS FREEDOM; GLOBAL WARMING; 02/05/07; BUENOS AIRES

11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Major newspapers report on US Undersecretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns and US Assistant Secretary Thomas Shannon's upcoming trip to Buenos Aires. Other international leading stories include the report from London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies on the US leading role; the Argentine Supreme Court of Justice following the model of the US Supreme Court of Justice's; USG criticism of Venezuela's politics and nationalizations; the Cuban transition; Argentina's press freedom; and the danger posed by global warming.

12. OPINION PIECES

- "The US gets closer to Argentina"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (02/03) "According to an announcement from the US State Department, two of the most important leaders of US diplomacy will travel next week to Buenos Aires in a gesture of rapprochement with Argentina. Their trip will serve to explore 'opportunities to increase cooperation' between the two countries.

"According to diplomatic sources based in this city, US Undersecretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns and US Assistant Secretary for Latin America Thomas Shannon will seek to make

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progress on an agenda with important objectives both in Buenos Aires and Brazil.

"According to local diplomatic sources, 'the agenda is broad and still open and the trip will focus on public diplomacy, i.e., interest in expressing goodwill towards Argentina and Brazil as well as showing clear support for Shannon's efforts to smooth disagreement.'

"The agenda will include a review of US investment in the country, the struggle against terrorism, the development of Haiti, the entry of Argentine products into the US, political developments in Venezuela and Bolivia and the nuclear plans of North Korea and Iran."

- "Bush wants to reinforce US ties with Kirchner"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," comments (02/03) "US President George W. Bush wants to build up a stronger relationship with Nestor Kirchner. On the eve of US

Undersecretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns' trip to Argentina and Brazil next week, he praised the US's relationship with both countries.

"Burns said 'We are going to Brazil and Argentina because we want to establish a stronger bilateral relationship with the two countries, and our ties with them are already in very good shape.' Burns will travel to Buenos Aires with US Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Thomas Shannon; Energy Counselor Greg Manuel; and a member of Condoleezza Rice's political team, William McIlhenny.

"... Their visit will focus on the importance of Latin America for the US and recognizes the leading role of Brazil and Argentina in the region. According to a US Department of State communiqu, 'Brazil and Argentina are partners we value, with whom we share many common interests and democratic values.'"

- "British analysts say the world stopped being unipolar"

Gustavo Sierra, international columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (02/04) "The US is strong enough to establish an international agenda, but not to implement it on a global level. This is the main conclusion of analysts from London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)... They even said that the world is no longer unipolar given the only superpower's inability to perform successfully on different fronts at the same time.

"According to the report, 'Washington will have to face an uncertain future in Iraq, Iran's nuclear plans and China's increasing influence in global issues.' And 'there are other countries, whether rival States or organizations such as Hezbollah, which, though strong enough to rebuff the US agenda are still too weak to establish an attractive international alternative or set a local counterpart.

"... All this could lead us to an anarchized planet with some

countries playing a regional leadership or an increasing influence in a new world, in which superpowers are gone for now."

- "The (Argentine) Supreme Court will incorporate public hearings"

Daily-of-record "La Nación" front-pages an opinion piece by its legal columnist Adrian Ventura, who writes (02/05) "The (Argentine) Supreme Court of Justice will introduce operational changes by copying a mechanism typical of its US counterpart - public hearings for cases of the greatest institutional significance.

"The idea is that lawyers and experts can present their arguments in the most relevant cases in front of court judges while being aired on TV. According to sources from the Court, it will enable lawyers to be listened to and will allow the Court increase its social role.

"... The US Supreme Court of Justice only deals with a few hundred cases per year because it is focused on the most important cases from a political and institutional point of view. And one of its most noteworthy features is that of public hearings."

- "US complains about the Chavez administration"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nación," comments (02/03) "In a new outburst of mutual charges and challenges in the US-Venezuelan bilateral relationship, the US called on Venezuela to treat US companies 'according to international standards' in the nationalization of their assets during the next three months.

"The spokesperson of the US National Security Council, Gordon Johndroe, said that Caracas should treat those companies in a fair way and pay them the corresponding billionaire compensation..."

"... The Bush administration reiterated its criticism of Venezuela's political evolution, in which the Congress delegated its legislative

powers to Chavez to rule by decree for the next 18 months, and regretted for "wasted economic opportunities". According to Craig Stevens, a spokesperson of the US Department of Energy, nationalizations imply a "concerning trend, which is far from market principles of openness and transparency.'"

- "The prestige of failure"

Jorge Rosales, international analyst of daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (02/04) "... Latin America is witnessing Venezuela's dangerous shifting towards an authoritarian regime, which only leaves popular voting with a few traces of representative democracy. It is not by chance, then, that waves of middle and progressive sectors of the country are flooding the consulates of foreign countries to obtain the required documents that will enable them to leave the country.

"The two nations Chavez has supported, Ecuador and Bolivia, also present signs of major weakness."

"... Not only is Europe concerned about the future of Latin America... US legislators have also stopped looking at Iraq for a while in order to focus on the situation of their Latin American neighbors."

- "Cuba - speculation on the transition following Fidel's (death)"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international analyst, writes (02/03) "... The absence of popular rebellion in Cuba against the revolution may help understand other ongoing processes in Latin America...

"... Market ideology... seems to be the basis for views like a Cuban Apocalypse or a pro-Western paradise in Iraq. Ignacio Ramonet, editor of Le Monde Diplomatique, advised that those in Washington and Florida State who expect the downfall of the Castro regime 'should stop looking at Cuba through an ideological prism and twisting facts to make them fit in a pre-conceived set of ideas.'

"... Some other voices agree with Ramonet. Julia E. Sweig, author of several books on the Cuban experience and head of the Latin American Studies Division at the Council for International Relations, said in a recent essay ('Fidel's final victory,' Foreign affairs) that this downfall will simply not take effect and 'that transition (from the post-Castro era) has already successfully started,' with gradual changes and no deluge whatsoever."

- "The US criticizes (President) Kirchner's treatment of the media"

Leonardo Mindez, on special assignment in Washington DC for leading "Clarín," writes (02/05) "International criticism of the Argentine Government's treatment of the media is mounting. This time, the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ)... stated that the Argentine government's tolerance to criticism is wearing out.'

"In its annual report 'Attacks on the media,' which will be submitted today in Washington, the CPJ stated that during 2006, 'the Kirchner administration continued distributing official publicity amid supporting media and preventing opposing media from receiving it.'

"Argentine authorities have also been accused of 'editorial interference for having abruptly canceled two independent programs in State-controlled media.'"

13. EDITORIALS

- "The US and the environmental crisis"

An editorial in leading "Clarín" reads (02/05) "For the first time over the last few years, the US has officially acknowledged the impact of fossil fuel consumption and gas emissions on global warming..."

"US President Bush pointed it out in his latest State of the Union

address...

"The important thing is to emphasize that concern for the environment is critical for the evolution of major world economies..."

"This sparks greater expectations that the US will finally ratify the Kyoto Protocol and manage its economic and technological affairs in tune with a more consistent approach to environmental protection."

To see more Buenos Aires reporting, visit our classified website at:
<http://www.state.sqov.gov/p/wha/buenosaires>

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